



# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Women who are food insecure do not have assured access at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. Food insecurity also reflects the emotional stress and anxiety experienced by women due to the lack of money to purchase food.<sup>1</sup> California participates in various federal food assistance programs to help women and their families. These include the Food Stamp program with 2.2 million monthly participants in 1998, the national school lunch program, and the Women, Infants and Children's Supplemental Food Program (WIC), with 1.2 million monthly participants in 1998. Other local sources of food assistance available to women include emergency food banks, community kitchens, senior meals sites, and home delivered meals.

The California Women's Health Survey (CWHHS) examined the association between food security and use of food supplement programs. The survey asked women, *"During the past 12 months, have you received food assistance from any of the following sources—emergency food banks, meals served at a*

*kitchen or community site, Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) vouchers or coupons, or senior meal site or home-delivered meals?"* In addition, the CWHHS asked all women six questions adopted from the U.S. Department of Agriculture scale used to produce estimates of the amount of food security in the nation.

- Less than 11% of women who were classified as food insecure used food support systems such as local food banks, community kitchens, or senior meals programs.
- The Federal WIC program was an exception. In 2000, 37% of women who were food insecure reported having used WIC in the previous 12 months. Findings on Food Stamp participation will be available in the CWHHS 2001 survey.

Notes: Estimates for WIC include only women who would meet eligibility requirements, women within 185% of the Federal Poverty Level who are either pregnant or who have children under six years of age. Estimates for Senior Meals include women ages 55 and older that were below the Federal Poverty Level. Food banks and community kitchens include only women who were below the Federal Poverty Level.

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton WL, Cook JT, Thompson WW, et al. "Household Food Security in the United States in 1995: Summary Report of the Food Security Measurement Project". September 1997.

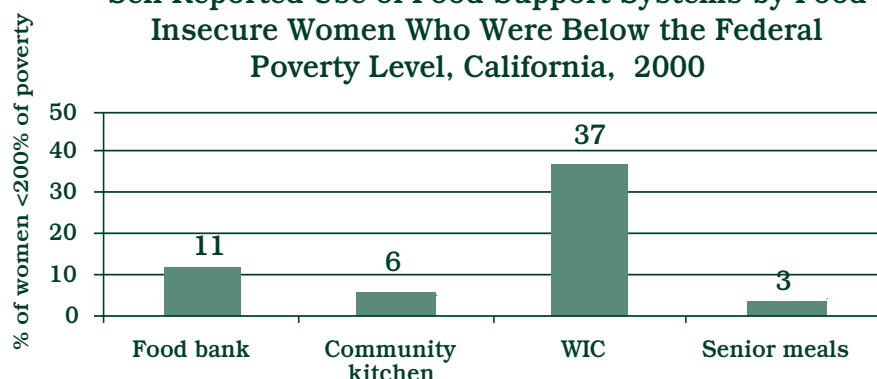
## USE OF FOOD SUPPORT SYSTEMS BY WOMEN CLASSIFIED AS FOOD INSECURE, CALIFORNIA, 2000

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### Public Health Message:

*Women who are food insecure are not using available food programs optimally. WIC is one potential setting for increased outreach to inform low-income women about other resources available. Federal or state changes in the Food Stamp Program may also provide opportunities to increase benefits and encourage more women to participate.*

Self Reported Use of Food Support Systems by Food Insecure Women Who Were Below the Federal Poverty Level, California, 2000



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